(d) Some of the States/UTs have taken up a campaign on this issue and others are continuing the exercise. During this, the respective State/ UT Governments review the BPL and AAY ration cards to eliminate the bogus ones from among them. This is an ongoing continuous process.

(e) to (g) During the year 2006, the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has booked cases against FPS dealers in the State as under:—

Details	Year 2006
No. of Inspections	8204
No. of Raids	582
No. of cases detected under 6-A/Deptt.	936
No. of cases ended with prosecution	3
No. of cases ended with cancellation of authorization	82
' No. of cases in which authorization suspended	285
No. of cases in which show cause notice issued	206
No. of person arrested/prosecuted and convicted	2

The State Government functionaries have seized goods worth Rs. 30.5 Lakh upto December, 2006.

The State Government of Maharashtra has arrested 133 persons for violation EC Act, 1955 and Rs. 52,83,228/- have been recovered as penalty during 2006.

Beneficiaries of forward trading in foodgrains

2774. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether forward trading in foodgrains and/or consumer goods has a recent origin, if so, the details in this regard;

(b) when such a practice was started and with what objectives;

(c) who are the beneficiaries from this practice and in what manner; and

(d) whether this practice has absolutely no bearing on the prices of foodgrains, if not, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Forward trading in food grains has a long tradition dating back to 19th Century. The objectives of futures trading in commodities are Price Discovery and Price Risk Management with respect to the underlying commodity.

(c) The farmers, exporters, importers, processors, stockists etc. can derive benefits from these markets through price signals emanating from commodity futures market and also by hedging their price risk.

(d) Futures prices are largely determined by the interplay of various factors such as expected price based on demand and supply scenario, cost of carrying the goods, perceptions of the market participants, international prices etc. In view of this, there is generally a difference between futures prices and prices in the physical market.

Onions as essential commodities

2775. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has requested the Central Government to declare onions as an essential commodity under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955;

(b) whether the State Government has also requested the Central Government to consider feasibility of importing onions from China and alloting it to Andhra Pradesh at Vizag Port for release to the consumers at the subsidized rate of Rs. 7 per kg. under the Public Distribution System;

(c) the response of Government to parts (a) and (b) above; and

(d) the action taken, so far, in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A request was received vide letter dated 24.10.2005 from the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh.

In the aforementioned letter a request was also made for sufficient allotment of imported onions to Andhra Pradesh so as to make it available to the consumers at reasonable price.